



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Valerie Ervin

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Montgomery County Council Approves Anti-Bullying Resolution

Resolution Seeks to Step Up Prevention Efforts

ROCKVILLE, Md., December 11, 2012—The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved a resolution, sponsored by Councilmember Valerie Ervin, to increase bullying prevention efforts through the enhancement of multi-disciplinary teams. These teams bolster bullying-prevention efforts through enhanced communication among service providers to get to the root causes of bullying and develop collaborative prevention strategies. Multi-disciplinary teams have been shown to be an effective method for providing and coordinating services for children and their families.

The Council also is requesting increased funding from the Maryland General Assembly, during the 2013 session, for anti-bullying efforts. The resolution was co-sponsored by Council President Nancy Navarro, Council Vice President Craig Rice and Councilmembers Nancy Floreen, Phil Andrews, Hans Riemer and George Leventhal.

In March 2012, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) reported that for the 2010-2011 school year, there were 4,678 reported incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation. This was a state-wide increase of 860 from the 2009-10 school year.

For the 2011-12 school year, Montgomery County Public Schools reported 515 incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation, of which 487 were confirmed. The 515 reported incidents were an increase of 78 from the 437 reported incidents in the 2010-11 school year. County-wide, 52.4 percent of MCPS students agreed with the statement, "In this school, students bullying other students is a problem."

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Councilmember Ervin considers bullying to be a critical issue facing today's youth. "Bullying among children and teenagers has often been dismissed as a normal part of growing up," said Councilmember Ervin. "Our attention needs to be focused on the devastating effects of bullying and the connection between bullying and other forms of violence. Silence is no longer an acceptable response to bullying."

Each October, Councilmember Ervin spotlights Bullying Awareness Month by providing Council proclamations to advocacy groups focused on prevention. In February 2012, Councilmember Ervin teamed with the County's Office of Human Rights and moderated a community symposium on prevention and intervention strategies to address bullying in schools. The symposium, organized by the Montgomery County Committee on Hate/Violence, equipped parents, students, school staff, community leaders, policy makers and others with strategies for preventing bullying and for dealing with it when it occurs.

"As Chair of the Council's Education Committee and as a former School Board member, I know the importance of the physical and psychological well-being of our children," said Councilmember Ervin. "Everyone in the community needs to be empowered with options to effectively respond to bullying."

Montgomery County Public Schools defines bullying as "Intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well being and is: motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status or physical or mental ability or disability; or threatening or seriously intimidating; and occurs on a school property, at a school activity or event or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school."

The full resolution can be found at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=6&event_id=841&meta_id=44011

Students who have been bullied; parents/guardians/close adult relatives of student victims; and school staff members who want to report an incident of alleged bullying, harassment or intimidation, can complete a confidential form and return it to the principal at the student victim's school. They may also contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time. The form is available at:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/230-35.shtm>

More information on bullying can be found from the MCPS web site at: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/bullying/>

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